ICE WINDOW: LETTERS FROM A BERING STRAIT VILLAGE: 1892–1902. Edited and annotated by KATHLEEN LOPP SMITH and VERBECK SMITH. Foreword by DOROTHY JEAN RAY. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2001. 390 p., maps, b&w illus., appendices, bib., index. Hardbound. US$34.95.

This is a rich, gorgeous book, a treasure for anyone interested in northwest Alaska and traditional life along the Bering Strait. Through a correspondence remarkable for its frequency and detail, it shows Inupiat life at the turn of the 19th century to the 20th. The volume is well illustrated, annotated, and beautifully printed, especially given its moderate price. It will be useful to both the student and the scholar.

Tom Lopp went to the Inupiat village of Kingegan, now called Wales, in 1890. At that time, this village of 527 inhabitants was, in his words (p. 364):

> the largest Eskimo village in Alaska, if not in the world….Wales was the summer rendezvous for the Eskimos of the region, for those living to the southward as far as Nome, and northward to the great Kotzebue Sound country. Here they would assemble with their great walrus-skin boats, or oomiaks, to make ready for their annual trading cruise to Siberia. Seventy to eighty of these canoes, manned by thirty to forty natives, would cross the stormy strait to obtain from the Siberian Chukchis furred reindeer skins for clothing, reindeer sinew for thread, and Russian leaf tobacco. A most adequate native merchant marine, for tons of material were transported to Alaskan shores in this manner.

Sheldon Jackson recruited Lopp and three other teachers from the Lower 48 in 1889–90. He sent Lopp and Harrison Thornton to Wales because no white people had yet lived there. After one hectic year, according to Reverend Toleef L. Brevig, "Thornton returned to the States for the purpose of seeking a wife, and also with the understanding that he should find a wife for Mr. Lopp who remained alone at the mission that winter. Mr. Thornton married in New York. The following spring he returned to the northland with the bride. He brought with him also a young woman who was employed as teacher at the government school. She knew nothing of the other plan, but within two months she was the wife of Mr. Lopp" (p. 9).

The young woman was Ellen Kittredge, who already had several years of teaching experience. Intrigued by Jackson's descriptions of the difficulties teachers would face in the Arctic, desiring a cold place rather than the hot south where she had been teaching, she answered Jackson's ad over the objections of her parents.

Ellen and Tom married in 1892. In 1900, Ellen's sister Frances and brother Charlie joined the couple in Wales, passing through Nome during the height of the gold rush. After 10 years and three children, the Lopps returned south to Seattle, where Ellen bore five more children and husband and wife both remained involved with the native communities of Alaska.

Ellen was herself the eldest of eight children. In her 10 years at Wales, she wrote to her parents and all of her sisters and brothers, leaving a voluminous correspondence. Frances and Charlie also wrote home frequently during their stay.

This collection is most significant because while the Lopps were trained teachers hired by a missionary association, they were not present in Wales primarily to proselytize and encourage conversion to Christianity. Their open attitude to traditional Inupiat life is obvious in the letters about their activities. Both learned the Inupiat language. According to their granddaughter, Kathleen Lopp Smith, who edited and annotated these letters, the Lopps "were reluctant to interfere with customs and beliefs about marriage, including early marriage and polygamy, subsistence activities, and burial, and they encouraged Native dancing and ceremonies in the qazqi (meeting house)" (p. 10). Consequently, these letters are a rich depiction of Inupiat life of the time, free from judgment about Native lifeways and values and free of religious and racial prejudice. Ellen Lopp expresses their attitude most succinctly in her letter of June 15, 1893: "One thing that troubles me when I think of these people becoming Christians is what to tell them they should or shouldn't do. They keep their own customs very carefully. But there are strict lines between right and wrong that they all agree upon. But we can draw no such line for them" (p. 64).

Kathleen Lopp notes that her grandparents' letters preserved descriptions and Inupiat stories that were lost when many Inupiat died during the various epidemics in the early 20th century. In her foreword, Dorothy Jean Ray writes that many people in Wales remember the Lopps and the positive influence they had on young people, particularly on future native teachers.

Tom Lopp was also instrumental in introducing reindeer herding to the area. He developed a pattern of apprenticeship for young herders, who, when trained, received stock to start their own herds. After the Lopps left Alaska, Tom became the "reindeer expert" for the Hudson's Bay Company, covering Baffin Land and Norway. He also rose to the position of Superintendent of Education of Natives of Alaska.

The well-annotated letters are interspersed with photographs, drawings, and copies of *The Eskimo Bulletin*, "the only yearly paper in the world" (p. 66), which the Lopps put together. Both the letters and the *Bulletin* contain descriptions of the whalers, prospectors, government agents, and other missionaries who lived in Alaska at that time, as well as depictions of Inupiat life.

As Ray notes, Kingegan was fortunate that the Lopps were the first white family to live there: "[Ellen's] letters clearly show the kind of person who was the best representative of a culture destined to change that of another..." (p. xiv). Her letters also show that Ellen's values would not be inconsistent with those of the early 21st century. Ellen's

granddaughter Kathleen notes that Ellen was not put out by disarray or unusual situations, finding her teaching more important than household chores and even than writing letters. Fortunately, she did write, well and often, never allowing interruptions—sometimes weeks passed between her beginning and ending a letter—to stop the flowing accounts of her decade in Alaska a century ago.

*Ellen Bielawski*
*Research Associate*
*The Arctic Institute of North America*
*11040 81 Avenue*
*Edmonton, Alberta, Canada*
*T6G 0S4*

FLOWERS IN THE SNOW: THE LIFE OF ISOBEL WYLIE HUTCHISON. By GWYNETH HOYLE. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. ISBN 0-8032-2403-6. xv + 269 p., maps, b&w illus., appendices, notes, bib., index. Hardbound. US$29.95.

*Flowers in the Snow* is a biography. Authors of most biographies provide a context in which readers are to understand, or at least become aware of, their subject's motivations. Hoyle's choice of context for her biography of Arctic botanist Isobel Hutchison is not so much the Arctic or botany, but the changing concept of "travels" and the revolution in social expectations for women in the first half of the twentieth century. This choice is evident in Hoyle's informative appendix, entitled "The literature of travel and adventure." It is also obvious from the map of northern North America in the introduction (facing p. 1): all non-American shores are represented with such fantasy that surely the geography of the Canadian Arctic is not a major theme of the book. Perhaps the map was drawn as an illustration of Isobel Hutchison's own atlas, which caused her travel itinerary north of 60˚ to have "some significant gaps, and more than a few questions marks" (p. 97).

Isobel Hutchison, in her own eyes, was a Lady traveler who happened to have learned botany at a young age, then botanized from home in Scotland, to Iceland, Greenland, Alaska, northern Canada, and later the European Alps. This she did in a period when men normally mounted expensive (and hence, fully funded), adventure-filled expeditions in these regions. As noted by Hoyle, Isobel's travels were not an adventurous litany of near disasters, but totally unorganized strings of friendships and opportunities. The reader is given here a recipe for cultural travel that can still be applied today: make friends and adapt. Isobel's northern achievements were sometimes overlooked because she succeeded in keeping hardships to a minimum.

*Flowers in the Snow* is also an essay. Hoyle's book is part of a series called *Women in the West*, published by the University of Nebraska Press. Most of the Arctic explorer books I have read are, to quote Hoyle (p. 222), of the "bluff, hearty, masculine adventure…" types. On opening Hoyle's book, I may not have been prepared for something quite different. The reading of Hoyle's book can be somewhat introspective. Throughout she offers many clues on Isobel's upbringing, personality, and sexual ambiguity. By chapter four, I was enjoying both the intimacy and the social analysis of the biography. How did so many people help Isobel while she walked, sailed, dogsledded, and was flown over northern landscapes, whereas her contemporaries considered these same landscapes barren and uninhabited? Why did women of the early twentieth century travel for pleasure, whereas men explored for duty or money in the same remote regions of the world? Hoyle did not provide most answers, but she explored them. I found this informative and refreshing. Also enjoyable was Isobel's adaptability; her evolution from a shy and self-isolated girl to a friendly, open, and entertaining woman provides a leitmotiv to her biography.

So is there anything on the Arctic and botany in Hoyle's book? There is. Anyone acquainted with Arctic literature and northern history will appreciate Isobel Hutchison's life. She was witness to many changes. Possibly, Hutchinson's work and itinerary of 70 years ago would be hard to replicate today: river boats, dog-sledding routes, trade and patrol ships, HBC houses, and transcontinental rail service have now all but disappeared. Isobel witnessed the beginning of a new transportation age in northern regions: the age of air travel. She was also present at the height of social and cultural upheavals for the Inuit, Inuvialuit, and Aleutians. Hoyle's book offers a glimpse into a changing North. In addition, Isobel Hutchison's friends will surprise any fan of Arctic exploration literature. Among others, she met Rasmussen and corresponded regularly with Stefansson. Botanists will be pleased to meet, through Isobel, Dr. Porsild (the elder) in Greenland and Dr. Porsild (the younger) at Reindeer Station near the Mackenzie Delta.

*Flowers in the Snow* is informative and at times entertaining. It can be recommended reading for general study on the history of travel. I would recommend it to any enthusiast of northern biographies, with the advice that the reader should be open to introspective moments.

*Suzanne Carrière*
*Ecosystem Management Biologist*
*Wildlife and Fisheries, Department of Resources,*
*Wildlife and Economic Development*
*Government of the Northwest Territories*
*600, 5102 50th Avenue*
*Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada*
*X1A 3S8*